



THE STRIKER STATEMENT

Issue # 36 OIF

29 January 2003



Editor

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CPT Ted Preister

2nd Brigade Rear-D Commander

STRIKER 6

I am proud to report to you that the Soldiers of the Iron Brigade are "on point" for the nation, actively engaged in fighting and winning the Global War on Terrorism. The Iron Soldiers of the 2d Brigade Combat Team are aggressively eliminating Former Regime Entities and Terrorist Cells that attempt to thwart the brilliant rays of freedom and democracy that are beginning to shine on Iraq. The Iron Brigade is continuing combat and stability/support operations that provide the people of Baghdad a safe and secure environment to facilitate Iraq's transition to a representative democracy; however, our role here in Baghdad encompasses much more than just security.

Every day, our Soldiers are involved in missions and activities that support restoration of critical infrastructure that set the conditions for the development and growth of Iraq's promising economy. Additionally, we are deeply involved with, and fully committed to, Iraq's future security being provided by Iraqis. In order to facilitate this upcoming security transition, we are recruiting, equipping and training Iraq's new generation of security forces and incorporating them into our daily operations.

The City of Baghdad's infrastructure has suffered decades of neglect. In our efforts towards reconstruction assistance, 2d BCT Soldiers have played an important part in the renovation and repair of critical city infrastructure systems. Over the last nine months, the Brigade has supervised 683 projects totaling over 8 million dollars in our two districts. These projects have been critical in returning a sense of normalcy to the lives of Iraqi Citizens. This work has made a tremendous impact and difference and includes, but is not limited to: school renovations; sewer and water improvements; electrical repair and power generation upgrades; trash removal projects; construction of playgrounds

and soccer fields; gas station pump repair, and Government Council and Iraqi Police Headquarters improvements.

The mission in Iraq is hard work. It is a dangerous, difficult and time-consuming challenge. That is why America asked Soldiers to perform it. The leaders of our great nation are committed to seeing the mission through. The fact that we are committed over the long term to the mission in Iraq means that we will pass on our ongoing operations to elements of the 1st Cavalry Division to continue. I have every confidence that they will continue, and expand upon, the great contribution that our soldiers have made thus far.

As tour of duty here in Baghdad is moving towards completion, the Brigade and Battalion staffs have initiated the planning for our return. 2d BCT Soldiers will be grouped for particular missions to guarantee the entire Brigade Combat Team returns to Baumholder in an efficient and effective manner. We will return to Germany in three major force packages. Initially, a small Advance Party of Soldiers will arrive in Baumholder early in April, ensuring that conditions are set for the successful return and reintegration of Soldiers and families. Force Package 1 will follow this Advance Party. Force Package 1 consists of Soldiers who have completed the mission in Baghdad and are not necessary to move equipment to the ports in Kuwait. You can expect to see these Soldiers returning in mid to late April. Force Package 2 is charged with movement and preparation of our vehicles at the ports in Kuwait and comprises our largest percentage of Soldiers. We should see this secondary concentration moving from Kuwait to Germany in late April to early May. Our final Force Package will be in direct support of loading and port support operations in Kuwait and will be moving to Germany when all 2d Brigade business involving redeployment is complete. We should see this small group of Soldiers returning in early May. We all need to keep in mind that weather, unforeseen or unanticipated mission requirements along with strategic level transportation changes can alter our redeployment plan. Rest assured, we will strive to ensure all our Soldiers are home as soon as possible.





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The Baumholder community is working hard on our reintegration plan. Reintegration activities will begin with continuous 7 half-day duty periods for the returning Soldiers. Returning Soldiers will report each day, including weekends to participate in mandatory reintegration tasks throughout these initial 7 days. These extremely important tasks will ensure our soldiers receive required medical screening, reunion briefings, professional counseling and complete personnel and finance paperwork. The period will emphasize the decompression time each Soldier should receive after serving in a hostile combat zone. At the completion of these seven days, we will conduct ceremonies, by returning Force Packages to mark the completion of reintegration and the transition back to life in Germany. Once a Force Package is released, our Soldiers will begin their well-earned thirty-day leave period. Following our much anticipated leave period, we will focus our energy on getting our equipment returned, repaired and ready for a period of home-station training before we begin our fall rotation to the USAREUR training centers.

Our operations in Iraq would have never met any amount of success had it not been for the great family members and Soldiers that comprise our Rear Detachment. ALL of our Soldiers, civilians, and families have displayed unmatched courage, extreme determination, selflessness, and dedication to our entire mission-- rear and forward, thus ensuring overwhelming success. They have embodied the true spirit of the Iron Brigade. For this I extend to each of you my heartfelt thanks. I look forward to reuniting the entire 2d Brigade Combat Team with tremendous anticipation. I know that every Soldier in the Brigade is anxiously waiting to return home to Germany; however, we still have much to accomplish here, so I ask for your patience. Daily, your contributions and support directly assist us in improving life in Baghdad; ensuring a stable, secure Iraq and a bright future for the Iraqi people. We enjoy and deeply appreciate your unwavering support and ask that you remain flexible with our impending redeployment schedule. We will complete our mission successfully and be home soon.

Thank you for all that you have done, and continue to do, in support of our great Soldiers in the 2d Brigade Combat Team.

STRIKE HARD!
COLONEL BAKER
STRIKER 6



Congratulations to SPC Ronald and April Reneau on the birth of a baby boy, Brian Andrew Reneau.

CONQUERORS

When the commander of Charlie Company, Task Force 1-35, CPT Graves, first observed the conditions of the neighborhoods in his area of responsibility, he quickly realized he and his soldiers had a lot of work to do. The neighborhoods were littered with mounds of trash, broken glass and rubble from damaged buildings. Many people in the neighborhoods looked to him for assistance with issues and concerns. The commander quickly initiated a plan of action. He knew that everything he did while in Iraq needed to assist Iraqis in establishment of local government and assumption of administrative and municipal elements within Central Baghdad.

Captain Graves had to first assess the local residents to determine who had the potential to serve as neighborhood representatives. These people formed the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC). With the council established, the possibilities for projects for neighborhood improvements emerged daily. CPT Graves and his soldiers went into the



neighborhoods to listen to concerns and to address problems. This process continued for months, while constant improvements were made inside the neighborhoods.



CPT Graves talking to residents in one of the neighborhoods that Charlie Company patrols.

Among the first of such improvements was the establishment of a community center. The community center quickly became the center of operations involving the locals. The center's value has improved in many ways. Among the improvements is a playground for the children, a clinic that operates seven days a week and an Iraqi Police (IP) station. The policemen at the IP station have even established a temporary holding facility for criminals. The community center has developed into a place where locals can go to solve their own problems.

Once Charlie Company assumed responsibility of a new neighborhood, Mahalla 215, a new set of challenges were discovered. A civilian staff was hired to assume some of the tasks associated with the apartment complex in the neighborhood. The staff's responsibility was to survey residents living in each apartment to account for all of the residents. The NAC and the apartment staff, with input from CPT Graves, began to collect a nominal rent from residents of the neighborhood to fund extensive maintenance needed within the apartment complex. The NAC also ensured funds were reserved for the purpose of providing security for the entire neighborhood. For families who could not afford the nominal rent, the NAC established an alternative to paying rent for their apartments.

These families would be required to work in the neighborhood in the form of community service. This work could be anything from area beautification to helping with the security requirements. Electricians or other skilled residents living in the neighborhood could help with problems they were qualified to fix. Establishing a system to make residents provide a service or pay a fee to live in the neighborhood is just one more way in which the locals of Al-Tashree are taking responsibility for their problems.



These things mark progress in a small section in Central Baghdad, Iraq. The four neighborhoods under control of Charlie Company, TF 1-35 are far from perfect, but they have come a long way. Thanks to the NAC and the hard working residents of Al-Tashree, the neighborhoods are improving everyday. While CPT Graves and his soldiers will still be there to monitor problems and concerns, the framework has been set for returning a large part of the responsibility of running the area back to the Iraqi community.

EVENTS

1/5 BTL FRG meeting – Thursday, 18:00 at the Red Cross

REGULARS

As I was growing up in South Louisiana we used to joke that there were two seasons, Hot and Hotter. At times this seemed true, but it was not. In the Winter we could get temperatures into the teens and sometimes even freezing rain and, less often, snow. What was true was that the temperatures were not





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consistent. One week we would be freezing, the next up into the 60's. We have been experiencing similar things here in Baghdad. Last week we saw several warm days with sunshine. This week we have seen temperatures drop, clouds over head, and rain.



COL Mundie with the professors from the biology department at Baghdad U.

This week Alpha Company continued their security missions in zone. 1LT Sean Gilfillan took a moment to reflect on their mission of the last two weeks, escorting the West Point Professors on the Baghdad University Campus; "It will be the friendships and companionships made between the professors (of both institutions) that will provide both schools with the goals they both value as their highest; the ability to teach their students up to date information using the most modern methods." All in all he felt the exchange was a success.

Bravo Company also continued their security mission in zone keeping an eye on the embassies. After setting up an impromptu roadblock near the Polish embassy PFC Keeling commented on their mission; "These checkpoints are an important part of our duty here. We don't catch (many of the terrorists) but it lets them know that they can't move as easily as they want."

Charlie Company continued their missions, but with a twist. Their second platoon has grown, so to speak. They now have a fully functional ICDC squad attached. With the help of these Iraqi allies the "Hooligans" participated in a mission to capture a man suspected of firing mortars at coalition forces.

The mission was a success and the company is looking forward to the day soon when the ICDC squad now serving with them will add others and become its own platoon. Their maintenance section worked hard this week to prepare two more Bradleys for transport back to Baumholder. With each piece of equipment shipped home we know that we are closer to our own redeployment.



Dr Jeff Alden offers stuffed animals to some of the Iraqi children at the hospital.

Several members of the Battalion Staff participated in a mission of mercy this week. They went to the Children's Hospital and delivered toys to the sick little ones there. While on site MAJ Brian McHugh, CPT Casey Randal, and Dr Jeff Alden were shown a new incubator that was purchased after a previous visit. 1LT Carey Morrow and CH Damon Onellion passed out toys while CPT Chanda Mofu took photos and helped control the crowd. At times the need seemed overwhelming, but all who participated felt they were able to make some friends and help. They also discovered that the water heaters were down and are making arraignments to get them prepared.

The soldiers of 1-6 continue to carry out their missions in sector with professionalism and dedication. Each day brings its own challenges and the troops are continually asked to stretch their skills and to react to situations that are not part of the training at CMTC. But all in all they continue to try to help the Iraqi people find the freedom that we hold so dear. Till relieved we continue to be **"Regulars...By God!"**





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EVENTS

- 1-6 IN Heart-to-Heart Potluck Dinner and Valentine-Making Party - Friday, January 30 from 4-6 p.m. at the BN Conference Room. Please bring a dinner dish to share and markers, crayons, and pencils to write your Valentine!
- Suicide Prevention Presentation - Monday, February 9 from 9:00-10:00 a.m. in the BN Conference Room. Anyone is welcomed to attend - bring a friend. Donuts and juice will be served. POC Kimberly McHugh at BC 904 787.

GATORS

TF 2-6 "Gators" has welcomed the second half of January with ceremonies, promotions, and continued success in training and missions. Some of the highlights of this past week were an induction ceremony to welcome soldiers to the NCO corps and two: ceremonies to award those who perform their duties and inadvertently elicit amusement. This month brought anew tradition for the officers of the Gator Battalion. The awarding of the "Toothless Gator" was created to recognize an officer of TF 2-6 who, though full of good intention, raised the most memorable snickers amongst the brotherhood of Gator Officers. The night of the awarding was filled with cigars and "near beer" for most and many laugh for all. Before nominations for the award were made, some of the junior officers put on skits, PowerPoint slideshows, and told stories about each other and their superiors to entertain all.

The award currently consists of a small blue noisemaking device that has a plastic gator head on the end, whose teeth must scrupulously be filed down to create the toothless gator. The significance of the "toothless gator" award is not the plastic toy itself, however, but the fact that it represents new efforts by the Battalion Commander, LTC Williams to strengthen the brotherly bond that is shared by all officers within the Gator Battalion.

In an effort to further strengthen the sense of unity amongst the NCO corps in TF 2.6, CSM Bobb holds a monthly ceremony to reward a fellow NCO. The award, a wooden camel sculpture, is given to an

NCO who does the most unintentionally humorous thing during the month. It is awarded for actions that were conducted with good intentions but that go sour and have no serious consequences- except causing some much needed laughter in the Gator Battalion.



**Monthly NCO
award – a
wooden camel.**

**This month the
winner wished to
remain
anonymous.**

Every month the NCOs gather at BN HQ in anticipation of the laughs sure to come. The ceremony itself consists of individual NCOs nominating each other by telling stories while CSM Bobb keeps a list of who has been nominated during the night. At the conclusion, the nominees are lined up in front of their fellow NCOs, the crowd is reminded of what they are there for, and then a vote by level of applause is conducted and judged fairly. On the evening of 20 January 2004 CSM Bobb also led the NCOs of the Gator Battalion in an induction ceremony. The NCO induction ceremony is designed to introduce and recognize newly promoted non-commissioned officers. 19 TF 2-6 NCOs were recognized in this latest ceremony. The ceremony is significant because not only are the NCO's the backbone of the army and of TF 2-6, but they will continue to lead and transform soldiers of today into the leaders of the future.

This months activities are important to TF 2-6 because they provide a much needed entertainment outlet for the men. This in turn helps us focus on the mission and our training so that we may execute our tasks safely and effectively. The value to morale that these types of activities provides is priceless and the Gator Battalion surely plans to keep these traditions





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alive when we redeploy to Germany, Until that time comes we will continue to stay alert and focus on our mission of providing and safe and secure environment for the people of Iraq.

THUNDER

The holidays came and went for the Bravo Battery Bears but not without frequent reflections of our loved ones in Baumholder. Some of the soldiers were able to be with their families for the holidays and we hope everyone had a wonderful time. We would all like to thank the FRG for the wonderful holiday goodies we received.

December was a busy month for us as we said goodbye to many outstanding soldiers and leaders. We also had to send SGT Mike Strong to Landstuhl to recover and physically rehabilitate after being injured in an attack. He performed valiantly and will be missed until fully recovered. From everyone in Baghdad: GET WELL SOON.

All too often though, we were taking Bears to the airport to leave. SGT Troche left on January 7th. SGT Troche was a rock in this battery for over three years and he will be sorely missed. SGT Demarsico also left us and we will miss watching this outstanding NCO develop into a Sergeant Major. Just when we were getting used to SSG Byrd, he left us as well in mid December. I am sure he had an entertaining flight back with SFC Hebert accompanying him. SFC Hebert has held leadership positions in every platoon in Bravo and has been a joy to work with. Thank you Smoke for all your hard work and efforts in Bravo. And finally on Christmas Eve, we said goodbye to SGT Harden and SSG Moles. Those two filled in on many, many missions for us as well as their "real" jobs and we are thankful for their efforts.

But just as there is a time to say goodbye, there is also a time to say hello and welcome. Christmas Eve day, we received four new soldiers: PFC Bryant, PVT Ross, PVT Mounts and PVT Villareal. We welcome them into our battery and look for great things.

We had the opportunity to promote some well deserving soldiers on the first of January. SGT Rodriguez, SGT Kruse and SGT Omic joined the

Corps of Non-commissioned Officers and the following were advanced to Specialist/E-4: SPCs Chhim, Dillard, Perry and Chaves. All of these outstanding soldiers are worthy of their new rank and responsibility.



CPT Wood and CPT Collins at their Change of Command

Finally, we have a new face in the command post. CPT Wood relinquished command Christmas Eve and ended his very challenging time with the Bears. He spent a majority of it in Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Kuwait and Iraq preparing for and executing this deployment. His wife Tana helped immensely with the FRG and they both will be sorely missed. Our new commander, CPT Jim Collins, comes to us from Task Force 2-6 Infantry where he was the Fire Support Officer. He has hit the ground running and looks forward to seeing everyone when we return.

Well, another month has passed and the light at the end of the tunnel is becoming just a little bit brighter. May this New Year continue to bring peace to Baghdad and give us a speedy reunion and a safe journey back home to our loved ones.

As I move to another part of Baghdad to support the DIVARTY, I would like to say, "Thank you" to all of you for the support, sweat, and tears. Without such a supportive and thoughtful FRG, my command would have been so much more difficult. The men of Bravo Battery understand the importance of such a wonderful group of families. You epitomize the Army family and I will be forever grateful. Bears!!!

CPT's Wood and Collins





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RAMS

Operation Iraqi Freedom was fought on two fronts, in essence. On one, large-scale combat operations were set in motion in order to oust Former Regime Loyalists and ensure the future safety of Iraqis everywhere. The other was to stabilize the infrastructure and society that Saddam Hussein had so long neglected to try and win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. The many dangerous combat operations won the battles along the way; however, our mission will not be complete until Iraq's infrastructure and way of life has been rebuilt and refurbished after a long, treacherous dictatorship.

I am assigned to Bravo Company, 40th Engineer Battalion. As a platoon leader, my platoon and I were attached to 2-6 Infantry Battalion. We received the mission to assist the Infantry in their efforts to assess and rebuild the infrastructure in their area of operations in southeastern Baghdad. This mission to help win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people and to prepare them for a life without the rule of Saddam Hussein lasted only for approximately four months but the effects of our work are still being felt.

The financial gap between the rich and poor, the privileged and underprivileged, can be seen in every country covering the globe. In Iraq, the difference is extremely evident and more unbelievable. In downtown Baghdad, lavish palaces with green lawns, tennis courts, and swimming pools line both sides of the street where only Saddam and his fellow Ba'athist party members were allowed to live and play. Only a few blocks away, once separated by armed guards and impenetrable fences, live those less fortunate in Iraq's society.

Poverty is everywhere in Iraq. It has been accepted as the norm for so long that the Iraqi people do not know any different. Some even fail to see the fact that it is the wrong way to live. Up until this point in time, very little could be done to improve the people's way of life. For all of the engineers, scientists, and other educated people in Iraqi society, they did not have the financial means to have a positive impact on the way they were living. They had the ideas but no means to accomplish them in order to improve their standard of life. In a way, Saddam was not allowing them to improve their lives

to the point where they had the fighting chance to be on par with him.

My platoon's initial impression of the sectors that we had been assigned was one of sadness and amazement. We could not believe that people were living the way these people were after we had just seen palace after palace only a few miles away. The question of exactly where and how to start was also prominent. There were so many problems that it was difficult to know where the root problem was in order to tackle that first. In order to help, the Army divided the infrastructure into five main components entitled SWEAT: sewage, water, electricity, academics, and trash.

Raw sewage was everywhere. It was in huge pools in the middle of streets, between buildings, in the medians, everywhere. It could be seen trickling along the ground out of houses and into small hand-dug trenches in the streets. These small trenches usually led into larger open-air trenches that in the end led to a pumping station or into one of the rivers. There were very few underground sewage systems. The ones that did exist were either plugged with trash and did not work, thus spilling their raw sewage into the streets, or were also used as the storm drain system. When it rains heavily, these storm drains that also carry the raw sewage fill up with water and overflow all of their sewage out into the streets.

The next problem was that the pumping stations used to pump the raw sewage from station to station and then into the river were old and broken down. They had no electricity to run their pumps, only some of which worked when there was electricity. The sewage pumping stations also had design flaws by having larger pumps pumping waste into the station and smaller pumps pumping it out thus causing more waste to be brought in than could flow out.

Finally, Iraq does not have any sewage treatment plants. The pumping stations use screens to filter out solids but there is no other source of treatment prior to the waste being deposited into one of the rivers. The water system was having many of the same problems as the sewage system. At the source, there were not enough water treatment plants. This was amplified by the disrepair of the pipes. Many were broken or rotted because they were so old. There were no connecting water lines to allow water



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to reach every household. Also, many of the pumphouses were without electricity so the pumps could not run, while many were just broken. In any sense, the water was being produced, but it was not being pumped out into society.

Electricity was very difficult to come by for several reasons. In many cases, the generators at the large power plants were broken and needed parts and maintenance. In the substations, the transformers and power lines needed to be fixed. The overarching problem, however, was the fact that the Iraqi people had looted nearly every piece of electrical wire out of the ground and from the power plants and substations in order to strip it down and sell the copper. These same people also looted the transformers to try and find parts to fix their generators at home.

The school system is vastly different in Iraq than it is in the United States. For one, there are not large, centralized schools that serve several towns. There are several small schools that cater to a specific age group. Second, boys and girls do not go to school together. Many times, the boys will go in the morning for four hours and the girls will go in the afternoon for the same amount of time, or vice versa. Upon visiting over fifty schools in the area, it is safe to say these children are learning with the bare minimum of supplies and furniture. They are making due with no desks, chairs, blackboards, school supplies, or even books in some cases. Many of the school buildings do not have windows, doors, or functioning restrooms.

Trash is also a large problem in and around Baghdad. There are no centralized garbage dumps, nor are there scheduled trash pick-up times. For the most part, people either burn their trash or they just throw it in the middle of the street or in a ditch that is supposed to be used to transport raw sewage to a pumping station.

Another important area that did not fall into one of the five categories outlined by the Army was that of health and welfare services, such as police stations, fire stations, and hospitals and clinics. All of these services were housed in rundown buildings without even the bare minimum of necessary supplies to effectively conduct their service. Hospitals and health clinics needed medical supplies and training

badly. Police stations needed structural help for their buildings and they needed a great deal of force protection help. Fire stations needed everything from new buildings to new hoses. I seriously doubt that any of the fire stations we saw could have even begun to fight a fire. The fire trucks were broken. The actual station house was partially destroyed. There was no definite guarantee that the firemen could fill the trucks with water based upon the unreliability of the town's water system. In the same respect, there was no spare water tank just in case they couldn't fill the trucks from a running source.

The sheer number of problems forced us to first identify their root causes. By not doing this, we could have begun work on several projects only to realize that nothing would be fixed because the problem was caused entirely by something else. To prevent this, my platoon would first make an initial assessment of the problem and the situation. In addition, we had an Iraqi engineer at our disposal who helped us narrow down the causes of the problem and focused our efforts on the most important problems at hand. He would use his knowledge of the Iraqi infrastructure systems and other information that he gathered from the local groups of people to help us develop a finalized scope of work to present to a contractor.

There were so many things that needed to be fixed that priorities had to be set and decisions had to be made on what projects to take on and what to leave for others. These decisions were made on the ground based upon what each leader felt was most important to that particular area and to that group of people. If we had tried to fix everything and satisfy everyone we would have been instantly overwhelmed.

Once we reached this point, there were several courses of action that we could act upon. We were authorized to use outside Army resources to help fix the problem. We were authorized to help fix the problem within our platoon if it was feasible. In addition, the Army began a program called Commander's Exceptional Relief Fund (CERF), which was designed to help pay the costs of fixing these problems through Iraqi contractors. The money used for CERF projects was originally seized during the war from loyalists to Saddam Hussein. This was our most used course of action because it





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allowed us to inject money back into Iraqi society and create jobs at the same time.

Upon developing a scope of work for the project and deciding to use CERF funds to fund the project, our Iraqi engineer would scour the community to find local contractors to complete the work. We always looked for local contractors to try and keep the money within the community and because it would give the workers a sense of ownership if they knew that whatever they were fixing was going to benefit themselves and their families. Three separate contractors were always required to submit bids for each project based upon the scope of work in order to gauge whether or not they were raising the prices and to create a small amount of competition. The lowest bidder was selected and began work.

Quality control was very simple. Much of the time, our Iraqi engineer conducted most of the quality control due to the language barrier, however, he always showed us what he thought was good and bad quality work. Those contractors that produced bad quality work were not offered subsequent contracts to bid on. We also used our engineer expertise to check on certain aspects of each project. The quality of the work also affected how the contractors were paid. Many times, parts of each job had to be redone before any payment was made. Other times, half of the overall contract was paid up front and the remainder was paid upon completion in order for the contractor to purchase the necessary supplies and equipment.

Despite the great strides made in improving the infrastructure, there were two main problems encountered with the process used to achieve those great improvements. From the time a problem was identified and a scope of work was developed to the time the funds were approved so the contractor could begin work was entirely too long. This process could take upwards of a couple months, which, in turn, caused contractors to become disillusioned with the Army's efforts to fix the infrastructure. Based upon their culture, we were "promising" them a job when we requested their bid on a project. They believed that once they produced a bid they would begin work immediately. Because the process to approve funds took so long, many contractors began to believe that we forgot about them and were disrespecting them in

that way. Also, due to the extremely fluid market in Iraq, many contractors were making their bids based upon the present market values. As the approval process began to take longer, these contractors were losing money because the cost of supplies in the market was slowly increasing and they were having to pay more but not get paid any more than what was originally agreed upon.

The other problem was that CERF money ceased to be paid abruptly and without notice. As explained before, the contractors thought we "promised" them a job and, therefore, many of them went out and purchased the necessary supplies with the little money that they had. When the CERF money stopped, the Army was forced to suspend all work and payments on any projects that were currently underway. This caused a great deal of grief amongst the contractors because they had just lost all of the money they had used to purchase their supplies, which they now had no use for due to the work stoppage. In essence, we had just increased their poverty level despite all of the efforts to decrease it and improve the Iraqi standard of living. Also, when the CERF funds stopped, much of the progress that had already been made on infrastructure improvements began to slip back to its original state. This began to occur because the root problems had been taken care of but the follow-on problems had not yet been attacked.

The high intensity battles may be over but the war in Iraq continues on as we try to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people and show them that we care about their standard of living and way of life. Their infrastructure has only begun to be mended after decades of neglect. The process the Army has in place is effective as long as it is instituted properly. The infrastructure may never be completely fixed, however, as long as the Iraqi people begin to take responsibility and ownership of its repair, it may be safe to say that the war will soon be won.





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PIONEERS

The question is "Who knew it could flood in the desert?" The soldiers of Alpha Company, 47th FSB, have known this was possible for quite some time. The pounding rains and 'gale force' winds near the end of last week easily inundated the hopes of rainy season coming to a halt. It was a flashback to the Thanksgiving timeframe when the sand and dirt transformed into mud and puddles. The LT's room flooded twice in one day (lesson learned is to have flood insurance) and our warehouse chief thought his tent was going to blow away in the middle of the night.

As we stood in formation for the Battalion 'fun run' on 23 Jan, the soldiers just laughed and said that maybe now the rest of the Battalion would understand what A CO goes through every day since we work outside. As 1SG Shinholster encouraged the childlike behavior of splashing one another (obviously echoed by girl-like screams), CSM Tobin laughed at us all trying to avoid the water as he dropped for pushups right in the middle of an ankle-deep puddle. The run definitely gave some soldiers a new perspective on the outdoor life, as they tromped through the small lakes and basically finished up the run looking like they'd run through a swamp.

LTC Hurley then assumed the podium to address soldier issues and of course the hot topic of redeployment. With our end dates in Iraq coming up quite quickly (near the end of April), the soldiers realized that there's more than enough work to keep them occupied and that time is going to fly by. While encouraged by the BSB's efforts to make reintegration quick and painless, the soldiers' attention is now directed at the bombardment of safety issues to ensure we all make it home safely.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

"Four Horsemen"

The Book of Revelation has long intrigued me, because it vividly predicts the future. No wonder so many people seek to decode the prophecy – looking for signs that signal the end. Imagine the power you

would have if you knew your personal future with certainty!

Clearly, nobody has been able to decode the "how" and "when" of the last days. Amazingly, however, scholars have proven that *the future of your marriage* can be predicted with haunting certainty. In fact, Dr. John Gottman of the University of Washington has proven with over 90% accuracy that if the marital "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" are characteristic of your marriage, you will divorce *within six years*.

Criticism is the first horseman - cutting blows that critique not only a spouse's behavior, but his or her character. The second horseman is like unto the first: *Defensiveness*. When one never accepts their spouse's influence, the end is near. The third rider, *Contempt*, brings destruction when one spouse sees only negative in the other. You can see contempt in a spouse who frowns, who sighs, who labels, rather than confront problem behavior. The fourth horseman is *Stonewalling* - when disagreement turns into pursuit, where one goes on and on while the other shuts down emotionally, gives "the silent treatment" or simply leaves without an estimated time of return.

The Four Horsemen are *certain signs of the end* - but they go away if you don't feed them. If you take action now to end these patterns, communication can be restored and love can return. In future newsletters I will go into more detail on how to do break the patterns of negative communication. For now, I ask you to ask yourself, "do I hear the hoof beats of these horsemen?" If you do, please speak with a family counselor. We want your marriage to thrive, and I am always available to listen and lend support.

Ch. Grossruck of the Thunder Ministry Team



"2nd BCT NEWSLETTER" For previous editions go to:
http://www.2bct.1ad.army.mil/2ndBCT/striker_newsletter.htm



THE STRIKER STATEMENT

Issue # 36 OIF

29 January 2003



BAUMHOLDER INFORMATION

FEBRUARY

- 1 Sunday Brunch, 10am, Rheinlander
- 10 African Music and Dance Troup, 11:30am, Rheinlander
- 13 USAREUR Training Holiday
- 14 Valentines Day
- 16 Presidents Day (holiday)
LN Employee Shop Day
- 23 Rose Parade, downtown Baumholder, 2pm
- 24 Town Hall, 4pm, Rheinlander
- 25 Deployment Support Group, 9am
LINKS, 10am
- 27 Job Fair, Rheinlander, 9am-4pm

MARCH

- 7 Breakfast at Rheinlander
- 11 Volunteer Reception
- 15 USAREUR Training Holiday
- 30 Town Hall, 4pm
- 31 Deployment Support Group, 9am
LINKS, 10am

APRIL

- 2 USAREUR Training Holiday
No DODDS School
- 4 Daylight Saving Time Begins
- 5-9 DODDS Spring Break
- 9 Good Friday, German Holiday
- 11 Easter Sunday
Brunch at Rheinlander
- 12 Easter (Ostermontag), German Holiday
- 27 Town Hall
- 28 Deployment Support Group, 9am
LINKS, 10am

DoDDS CALENDAR

- 1st Tuesday of the month SAC Meeting, Baumholder High at 1630
- 3rd Thursday of the month SAC Meeting, Wetzlar Elementary at 1430

- 02 Feb Ground Shadow Day
- 16 Feb No School, Presidents' Day
- 02 April No School, Teachers Work Day
- 05 April Spring Recess Begins
- 12 April Instruction Resumes

- 30 April 1700 Buccaneer Night
- 13 May Acceleration Date
- 31 May No School, Memorial Day
- 04 June High Graduation
- 09 June Last Day of School SY03/04

Public Affairs Host Nation Events

Madeleine Dwoiakowski, 485-1600

- 31 Jan Night of the dance, city theater, Idar-Oberstein, 2000
- 2 Feb Market at Kirn 0900-1400
- 5 Feb Lichtmess market at St. Wendel
- 7&21 Feb Flea market at Metz, France
- 8 Feb Flea market Idar-Oberstein, Vollmersbachstrasse
- 19 Feb Old Women Fasching (tie cutting)
- 24 Feb Fasching market at Kusel

Fasching Parades:

- 21 Feb Street Fasching at Kusel, 1000
- 22 Feb Fasching Parade at Kirchenbollenbach, 1400
- 22 Feb Fasching Parade at St. Wendel, 1400
- 23 Feb Fasching Parade at Idar-Oberstein, 1410
- 23 Feb Fasching Parade at Fischbach, 1400
- 23 Feb Fasching Parade at Baumholder, 1410
- 23 Feb Fasching Parade at Kirn, 1411

Children Fasching events:

- 15 Feb Costume ball at Kirn, Hellbergturnhalle, 1411
- 22 Feb Fasching party at Berschweiler, Dr. Darge Gym
- 22 Feb Costume ball at Kusel, Lehnstrasse, 1400
- 22 Feb Fasching party at Rohrbach, 1400
- 22 Feb Fasching party at Leitzweiler
- 22 Feb Fasching party at Hahnweiler
- 23 Feb Fasching party at Baumholder, 1500
- 23 Feb Fasching party at Fohren-Linden, 1400
- 23 Feb Costume ball at Heimbach, 1411
- 24 Feb Fasching party at Thallichtenberg

RHEINLANDER EVENTS

- Come to Sunday Brunch! 1 February, two sittings to meet your schedule, 1000 or 1200. \$12.50 Adults, \$9 ages 10-15 and \$6 ages six -nine ages 5 under free. Reservations required. 485-7507





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- Celebrate Black History month with a performance by BI-OKOTO, African Dance and Music Group. Performance is February 10th at 1130 in the Rheinlander Convention Center. DSN 485-8779.
- Let your voice be heard at the Army Family Action Plan Conference. Conference runs 19-20 February at the Rheinlander Convention Center. Call DSN 485-6985 for more information or to volunteer.
- Job Fair Friday, 27 February at the Rheinlander from 900-1600. Call DSN 485-6046.
- Family Night- Pizza, pasta, and salad buffet
- Wednesdays, 18-2100, ONLY \$4 for kids under 12!
- Internet only 9 cents/minute in the Cyber Zone!!

OUTDOOR REC TRIPS

- Polish pottery shopping. Get your friends together and join Outdoor Recreation on Friday 6 February for an express trip to Poland. Cost is \$75 for adults and \$55 for children.
- Frankfurt Zoo, 28 February. Cost is \$35 for adults and \$25 for children. Includes transportation and admission.
- Skiing and Snowboarding in the Black Forrest 7 & 24 February \$35.
- Ski-Snowboarding to Austria 13-16 February \$265.
- **Seats are limited – so call today to reserve your space! DSN 485-7182.**

CYS

Joanne Hernandez, 485-7198

Torch Club Valentine's Day Dance

Date: Friday, 13 Feb at the Underground

Time: 1900-2300

Cost: \$3

Middle School Program

Must be registered with Youth Services

Sweetheart Dance

Date: Sat, 14 Feb, at the Teen Café

Time: 2000-2400

Cost: \$3

High school youths, 9th – 12th grade

Must be registered with Youth Services

High School Dining Out

Date: Sat, 28 Feb, Mexican in Kaiserslautern

Time: 1600-2100 (Depart from the Teen Café)

Cost: Order off the menu

Kids' Night Out

1st-6th grade @ Wetzel SAS 485-7475/8792

Sat, 21 Feb

1800 – 2200

Must be registered with CYS

Pay at time of sign-up, \$6/child

Spaces limited.

Parents' Night Out

Infant-Kindergarten @ Wetzel CDC 485-7133/7284

Sat, 21 Feb 1800 – 2200

Must be registered with CYS

Pay at time of sign-up, \$10/child

Spaces limited.

Spring Youth Sports

Registration 2-27 February, ages 5-18.

Baseball and Softball. Volunteer coaches needed.

Skills assessment 6 March and practice begins 15

March. Call DSN 485-7276.

COMMUNITY RECREATION DIVISION

POC: Jeffrey Milkes at DSN 485-6352

The Rec Emporium has a new name – The

Rolling Hills Athletic Club. Membership fees will also

change – one price will cover the entire facility.

- Water Aerobics at the Rec Emporium

MWF at 12:00; T Th at 18:30

- The bowling center will be closed January through

March for renovations!

ARMY FAMILY TEAM BUILDING (AFTB)

Next Class: 4 Feb from 8:30-14:00 – **Level I**

All classes are held at the AFTB Classroom. Health

Clinic Complex Building 8745 Room 11 2nd Floor.

For any questions please call Mari Haley, AFTB

Program Coordinator at 485 - 8542 or 06783 - 6 - 8542.

NEW AEROBICS SCHEDULE

POC: Edna Price





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Mountaineer Gym M-Th at 9:00

M- Resist-a-Ball

T – Step

W- Yoga

Th- Interval/Circuit

Hall of Champions M-Th at 17:00

M- Interval/Circuit

T-Yoga

W- Step

Th- Resist-a-Ball

Hall of Champions M-Th at 18:30

M- Step

T- Resist-a-Ball

W- Interval/Circuit

Th- Yoga

NOTE: Hand weights, yoga mats and resist-a-balls are not provided. They can be purchased at the sports store in Baumholder or Vogelweh. All classes last approximately 1 hour.

ARTS AND CRAFTS CENTER

Instructional Classes

-12 Febraury, Quilting Class "Valentines Wall Hanging" \$25.

-14 February, Valentines Day children's ceramic party \$5

-21 February, Kids Play Day "Making Fasching Masks" \$5

Call DSN 485-6687 for more information or to register.

AUTO SKILLS CENTER

Instructional Classes

--Basic Auto Maintenance 12 & 26 February

--Introduction to Brake Systems 3 & 17 February.

All classes begin at 1400 and are free with bay rental. Call DSN 485-6117

RE-INTEGRATION AFTER DEPLOYMENT

ACS Spouses Reunion Training. Training can help reduce reunion stress, improve marital communication and teach signals that may indicate a need for help. Training is every Wednesday. Child care is available provided your reserve with ACS in

advance. **We can even come to your FRG meeting for group training sessions (day or evening).** Call DSN 485-8188.

BAUMHOLDER EDUCATION CENTER

- Functional Academic Skills Training (FAST) 09-25 Feb 2004
- Term 3 College and Adult Education Courses 19 Jan – 12 March 2004
- Adult Education English as a Second Language (ESL) Course Wed/Fri 1100-1300 Hrs
- Effective Military Writing I (ASEP class for NCO's) Feb 23-27 1300-1700 Hrs
- Iraqi Headstart Feb 5/6 and Feb 12/13
- Army Emergency Relief Spouse Education Assistance Application Deadline: 01 Mar 04 For Term 4
- University of Oklahoma Representative – 03 Feb 04
- University of Phoenix Representative – 04 Feb 04
- New financial aid forms for 2003-04 now available.

Visit the Education Center in building 8332 or call 485-7557

<http://www.baumholder.army.mil/education>

ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST INFORMATION

- Absentee ballots may be requested from your state of residence. Please follow instructions below:
- Go to www.fvap.gov
- In left menu bar, click on " On-line Federal Post Card Application".
- Go to bottom of this page and click on " Click Here To Get Form".
- Click on your respective state of residence for "OFPCA". (The state VAG will give you more detailed information for individual state guidelines.)
- Read ALL instructions before downloading the form.
- Fill out the absentee ballot request form and mail per directions of your state.





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- (Generally, this is mailed to the Supervisor of Elections in your state capital.)

Stop by the Main PX and meet your Community Voting Assistance Officers. They will be there on Feb 5th from 11am-2pm to hand out flyers and answer questions.

222nd BSB Community Voting Officer: MSG Lester Reed: 485-7138
222nd BSB Community Alternate Voting Assistance Officer: Ms. Tyler at DSN : 485-8892 Civilian: 06783-6-8892

MEDICAL CARE DURING REINTEGRATION PERIOD

- **Priority of resources will go to returning soldiers**
- Acute Care only for six week period
- Well Baby and OB Care will continue as usual
- Access to Pediatric Care should not be impacted
- Wellness visits and other routine services postponed
- Medical Refills and CYS Physicals will be done on walk-In basis on Thursday evenings
- Physical Therapy will be AD Only
- **Use of Krankenhause during clinic hours will be authorized**
-

TAX CENTER

FREE Income Tax Assistance!
Federal & State Returns
Electronic Filing

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

Free IRS tax training will be provided
Call 485-6506 now!

LOCATION: Building 8670, next to Community Bank
DSN: 485-8644
OPENING DAY: 31 January 2004
HOURS: Mon-Thurs 0900-1700 Fri 0900-1500

BAUMHOLDER COMMUNITY SPOUSES CLUB

Cathy Hurley, 485-7184

Come join us at the February luncheon on February 18 at 1130 in the Rheinlander. The theme is "Heart to Heart Tea". There will be an English bone china vendor and our own CPT Frizelle will be speaking on "Heart Healthy Tips". Childcare will be provided on site if you contact Cher Lim by February 4 at cher.lim@us.army.mil or BC/189 302

It's Not Too Late to Join!

Memberships are available for \$8.00 for the rest of the year (ending in May 2004). Applications are available at the Thrift Shop and the Welcome Center or contact the Membership Secretary, Jill.Watson@us.army.mil for further information.

BCSC Spring Bazaar - The Place to Shop!

The BCSC Spring Bazaar is coming to town! The bazaar will be held February 27 - February 29 in the Hall of Champions from 1000 - 2000 on Friday and Saturday and 1000 - 1800 on Sunday. Admission is free to all valid ID card holders and their guests. If you would like to volunteer at the bazaar, please contact the Bazaar Chairperson at ginalyn.cowles@us.army.mil.

NEW PARENT EDUCATION & SUPPORT PROGRAM

Melody Tavera & Jean-Marie Williams, 485-6932/6931

Nurturing Parenting: Infants, Toddlers & Preschoolers

- 12 two-hour sessions which meet one day a week for 12 weeks
- Every Monday, 1600 – 1800, starting 16 Feb 04
- Classes will take place in Bldg. 8222 (formerly the Baumholder USO office).
- Two separate groups – one for parents and one for children which meet concurrently.

Parents & children engage in a 30-minute family nurturing time which includes games, songs, infant & child massage, and a snack!

